DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 895 PS 027 480

AUTHOR	Miller, Beth
TITLE	Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time.
INSTITUTION	Wellesley Coll., MA. Center for Research on Women.
PUB DATE	1998-11-00
NOTE	4p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on women, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02181; Tel: (781) 283-2547; e-mail: NIOST@wellesley.edu; Web site: www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC
PUB TYPE	Reference Materials - General (130)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*After School Programs; *At Risk Persons; Crime; Delinquency; *Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Leisure Time; Middle School Students; Public Opinion; *Secondary School Students; Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS	Before School Programs

ABSTRACT

This fact sheet details information on the ways children spend their out-of-school time. The fact sheet includes information on the number of school-age children with working parents; enrolled in before- or after-school programs; and spending time without adult supervision. Also highlighted are the risks to children during out-of-school hours for participating in or being a victim of crime, academic problems, substance use, and excessive television viewing; information about the availability, costs, and impact of out-of-school programs; and information on the extent of public support for out-of-school programming. Contains 26 references. (KB)

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College
November, 1998

Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time

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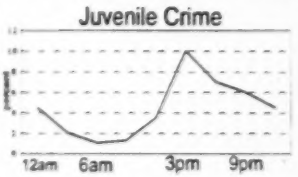
THE NUMBERS

- Over 22 million school-age children (62 percent) have working parents (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).
- In 1991, it was estimated that only 1.7 million K-8th graders were enrolled in 49,500 formal before- and/or after-school programs (Seppenan, et. al., 1993).
- Children spend only 20 percent of their waking hours in school (Miller, 1997). The gap between parents' work schedules and students' school schedules can amount to 20 to 25 hours per week (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1998).
- Experts estimate that nearly five million school-age children spend time without adult supervision during a typical week (Miller, 1995).
- An estimated 35 percent of 12-year-olds care for themselves regularly during after-school hours when their parents are working (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

WHAT HAPPENS DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL HOURS?

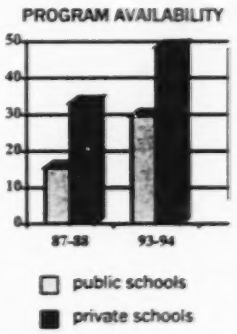
- Violent juvenile crime triples during the hours of 3pm and 8pm (Fox & Newman, 1997). Two hundred eighty children are arrested for violent crimes every day (Children's Defense Fund, 1998).



- Children are most likely to be victims of a violent crime by a non-family member between 2pm and 6pm (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 1996).
- Children without adult supervision are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior, and substance use. Children who spend more hours on their own and begin self-care at younger ages are at increased risk (Dwyer et al. 1990; Pettit, 1997).
- Children spend more of their discretionary time watching television than any other activity. Television viewing accounted for 25 percent of children's discretionary time in 1997, or 14 hours per week on average (Hofferth & Sandberg, 1998). The total amount of time children spend watching TV has declined since 1981, due in part to the fact that children are spending substantially more time in school now than they were in the past.

FACTS ABOUT OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

- Almost 30 percent of public schools and 50 percent of private schools offered before- and/or after-school care in 1993-94, compared to only 15 and 33 percent in 1987-88. These programs are least available in rural areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).



- The Government Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school time programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25 percent of the demand in some urban areas (GAO/HEHS-97-75, May 1997).
- Fees for programs for school-age children vary. Parent fees range from $2.41 per hour in Minnesota to $4.70 per hour in New Jersey (NACCRRA, 1998).

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- Eighty-three percent of program income is from parent fees and 86 percent of parents pay the full program fee (Seppenan, et al., 1993).

- A number of studies have found that children who attend quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in programs. They also have more learning opportunities, academic or enrichment activities, and spend less time watching television (Posner & Vandell, 1994; Baker & Witt, 1995).

- Researchers found that children who are under adult supervision, in programs or at home, have better social skills and higher self-esteem than their peers who are unsupervised after school (Witt, 1997).

- One study found that, compared to peers with lower attendance rates, children who attend after-school programs regularly have higher grades and self-esteem (Baker & Witt, 1996).

- Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative, learn to better handle conflicts, develop an interest in recreational reading, and receive better grades due to participation in after-school programs (Riley, et al., 1994).

- A study of two housing projects, one with a 32-month after-school recreation program, and one with minimal recreation services, found that in the housing project with the after-school program, juvenile arrests declined by 75 percent compared to the years prior, while juvenile arrests increased by 67 percent in the housing project offering minimal services (Jones & Offord, 1989).

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49 percent less likely to use drugs and 37 percent less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

- Eighth graders who take care of themselves for 11 hours or more per week are at twice the risk for substance abuse compared to those who are not in self-care at all (Richardson, et al., 1988).

PUBLIC SUPPORT

- Ninety-two percent of Americans feel that there should be organized activities for children and teens during the after-school hours (C.S. Mott Foundation, 1998).

- Eighty percent of Americans say they would pay an additional $10 per year in taxes to fund programs in their communities (C.S. Mott Foundation, 1998).

- Almost three-quarters of parents of school-age children say they would be willing to pay for a quality school-based after-school program for their children, but only 31 percent of elementary school parents and 39 percent of middle school parents report that their child attends a program in his or her school (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

- Forty-six percent of parents believe it is very important that schools stay open all day, and 43 percent of parents think after-school activities should be a high priority, despite limited education budgets (Newsweek, 4/27/98).

- In a recent survey of police chiefs, nine out of ten surveyed support prevention programs for youth as an effective way to fight crime (Fight Crime Invest in Kids, 1996).

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